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## **FRESNO MAN SENTENCED TO 30 YEARS IN PRISON FOR PRODUCING AND DISTRIBUTING CHILD PORNOGRAPHY**

WASHINGTON – A Fresno, Calif., man was sentenced to 30 years in prison, to be followed by a life term of supervised release, for producing and distributing child pornography, Acting Assistant Attorney General Matthew Friedrich of the Criminal Division and U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of California McGregor W. Scott announced today.

Raymond William Ronell Jr., 44, pleaded guilty to the crimes on Sept. 24, 2007, and has been in custody since his arrest on Nov. 25, 2005. According to court records, the charges against Ronell emerged from a child abduction investigation begun by the Fresno Police Department on Nov. 25, 2005. On that day, police were alerted to the disappearance of a 12-year-old Fresno girl. The minor was returned to her home later that day and Ronell became a suspect in her disappearance. Court records reveal that as part of their investigation into her disappearance, detectives seized a digital camera from Ronell's car, and were later able to recover previously deleted, sexually explicit images of the minor which Ronell produced and stored on a memory card. A search warrant executed at Ronell's residence led to the seizure of five computer hard drives and various electronic storage devices containing digital images. Subsequent forensic review of that material revealed several thousand still and video files of child pornography, including images of infants being sexually abused by adult males.

Information contained in filed sentencing documents characterized Ronell's collection of child pornography as one of the most extensive and extreme that has ever been encountered by law enforcement. The documents further reflect that an analysis of parts of the collection led to the identification of a minor victim who had been taken into protective custody in Indiana, as well as the arrest of a suspect in Iowa who later confessed to victimizing 23 minors, including six who were actively being molested at the time of the suspect's arrest in May 2006.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney David Gappa. The investigation was conducted by the Fresno Police Department, with assistance from the Fresno County Sheriff's Department Computer Crimes Unit and the Department of Homeland Security's Immigration and Customs Enforcement office in Fresno. Trial Attorneys James Silver and Barak Cohen of the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS) assisted at sentencing. A computer forensic specialist from CEOS's High Tech Investigative Unit also provided testimony at the sentencing hearing.

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